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Milwaukee, WI 53212



United Way  
of Greater Milwaukee



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Summer/Fall 2011

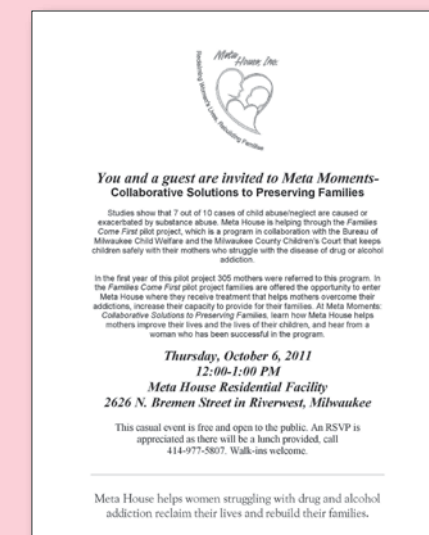
## Families Come First

This October marks the halfway point of Meta House's *Families Come First* 3-year initiative. Started in February of 2010, the *Families Come First* pilot project is a program developed by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, the Milwaukee County Children's Court, the Behavioral Health Division of Milwaukee County and Meta House to help pregnant women and postpartum women who struggle with the disease of drug or alcohol addiction. Focusing on the family as a unit and keeping children with their mothers is a vital part of the Meta House treatment program. In the *Families Come First* program mothers are offered the opportunity to enter Meta House where they receive treatment that helps them overcome their addictions and increase their capacity to keep their children safe.

Studies show that 7 out of 10 cases of child abuse/neglect are caused or exacerbated by substance abuse and it is estimated that over 28,000 women in Milwaukee suffer from the disease of addiction. In the first 13 months of this pilot project 306 mothers who were either pregnant or gave birth to a drug affected infant were referred to the *Families Come First* program, an astounding number given the exclusionary criteria for the program and the fact that not all hospitals were making referrals. Once referred to the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, a collaborative assessment by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and Meta House is conducted to determine the safety of the child and the extent to which substance abuse is hindering the safety of the child. When appropriate, families are offered the opportunity to enter the Meta House Family Treatment Program starting at the residential level of care where the mother and her child/ren can be treated together.

The collaborative assessments bring all parties together for open discussion. These assessments prove helpful in highlighting strengths within each family as well as services needed. As a result of the opportunities offered through *Families Come First*, approximately three-quarters of women voluntarily agreed to participate in the program and came to Meta House to work toward improving their lives and the lives of their children.

The *Families Come First* pilot project is a first step in determining treatment solutions that work for women, their families, and the community. On Thursday, October 6, 2011 at *Meta Moments: Collaborative Solutions to Preserving Families* you can learn more about how Meta House is supporting these families and hear from a woman who has been successful in the program.



## Meta Moments: Collaborative Solutions to Preserving Families

Thursday, October 6, 2011  
12:00 – 1:00 PM

Meta House Residential Facility  
2626 N. Bremen Street, Milwaukee

Please RSVP 414-977-5807

[www.metahouse.org](http://www.metahouse.org)

## Current Wish List

We appreciate your donations of new or gently used items that help our women and their children. At this time we are looking for: school supplies, board games, BPA-free water bottles, personal hygiene products (shampoo, conditioner, lotions) for all hair types, winter coats for women, household supplies (towels, plates, bowls, silverware, irons, microwaves).

## Thank you to our Board of Directors:

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## You Can Leave a Legacy

Please consider making Meta House part of your estate plan or making a deferred gift (such as bequests, trust and annuities) to the agency. Call 414-977-5807 to discuss the best options for you and your family.



## Message from Executive Director, Francine Feinberg



September 2011 honors the 22nd celebration of National Recovery Month. This year's Recovery Month theme, "Recovery Benefits Everyone" emphasizes the advantages individuals, families, and communities get when someone receives the treatment he or she needs to overcome addiction to drugs or alcohol.

When a woman comes to Meta House a team of counselors, family members, and supporters gather with her to map out a plan to help her succeed in treatment. Comprehensive services are provided to women and their children in an effort to treat not only the substance abuse, but also issues of mental health, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and past physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

The *Families Come First* pilot project is a great example of how a woman's recovery from the disease of addiction positively affects her family and the community. This program is helping child welfare workers identify the impact of substance abuse, its connection to child safety, and the success achieved by allowing mothers to get the treatment they need and become good parents.

Recovery Month is a national observance that encourages all people to seek treatment for substance use disorders, celebrates individuals and families in long-term recovery, and acknowledges those working in the field who provide recovery services. Please join us throughout the month of September in raising awareness about the impact of substance abuse on women and families and support those women who have succeeded in reclaiming their lives and rebuilding their families with your help.

## A Day for Meta House a Success!

Thank you to all who attended *A Day for Meta House*. This year brought a record number of guests to the annual fundraiser, with almost 1,000 people between the breakfast, lunch, and evening events. Because of you we surpassed our goal of \$85,000 and raised a net total of \$130,000! Every penny of the amount raised will support critical programming at Meta House in 2011.

In tandem with the *A Day for Meta House* event, the agency launched a social media campaign celebrating mothers. Our goal of reaching 750 "Likes" on our Facebook page was met during our breakfast event, and by Mother's Day and ended with 935! In addition, our YouTube views totaled 1,818 by the end of Mother's Day, which exceeded our goal of 1,500. Thank you to Manpower Group for donating \$1,500 to match \$1 per YouTube view, and WaterStone Bank for donating \$1,500 toward our Facebook goal.

***A big thank you to all of our supporters who helped us reach and surpass these goals!***

## Meta House is a 2011 Top Workplace



The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, in collaboration with WorkPlaceDynamics, recently released a survey of Milwaukee-area Top Workplaces. Over 200 companies took part and Meta House received an Honorable Mention Award. The Top Workplaces program recognizes small, midsize, and large organizations that provide their employees with a great place to work. Highlighted companies are selected through a survey completed by their employees.



## Volunteers Help Clients Plant Produce Garden

Recently, a group of volunteers from Congregation Shir Hadash in Mequon, WI joined Meta House staff and clients in building and planting gardens on the north side of our parking lot. Our women and their children will be in charge of taking care of the vegetable gardens, and will also enjoy the produce at harvest time.

***Thank you to Congregation Shir Hadash for supporting Meta House clients and their children!***

## Meta House Helped Me Keep My Daughter



Like any mother, Cheron vividly remembers the day nearly three months ago that she gave birth to her daughter, Cherell. Unlike many mothers, however, what Cheron remembers most is the fear and panic. Addicted to crack cocaine, she was heavily using drugs throughout her pregnancy and her baby tested positive at birth. Cheron was terrified that her newborn daughter would be taken away from her. "I was depressed and scared at the same time. I wanted to keep her with me," she relates, "she's my heart, my connection; I want her to know who her mother is."

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare stepped in to assess the situation. Cheron's desire to get help for her addiction prompted her referral to the *Families Come First* program. *Families Come First* is a pilot project among Meta House, The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Milwaukee County Children's Court. It is intended to keep children safely with their mothers, who struggle with problems of substance abuse, while providing treatment for the family at the residential level of care.

"At the time I had my daughter," Cheron recounts, "I was homeless. I had nowhere to go. I talked to my family about Meta House. I wanted to help myself; I wanted to improve for Cherell." Through the *Families Come First* program Cheron was referred to the Meta House Residential Treatment Program. She was allowed to keep her newborn daughter and is working hard to overcome her addiction.

"Meta House places a high priority on successfully treating mothers while ensuring children are protected and their needs are also met," states Dr. Francine Feinberg, Executive Director of Meta House. "The *Families Come First* project ensures the family unit is supported and preserved alongside a mother's recovery process."

Cheron, who is hearing impaired, is celebrating nearly 3 months of sobriety, and continues to learn and grow in her recovery. "Meta House is teaching me how to be a good mother," she states. "My baby smiles and she pays attention to my voice when I talk to her. She is always with me; I can't hear her voice or know when she's crying, so Meta House is teaching me tools like how to pay attention to her needs."

For Cheron, the *Families Come First* program was a vital catalyst in getting her the help she needs to reclaim her life and build a family with her newborn daughter. "I want my daughter to have a better life with me and my family," Cheron says, "I see improvement in myself. I'm not worried anymore. I feel encouraged."

## Yes, I want to support Meta House!

Please accept my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Meta House, Inc., a 501 (C) (3) not-for-profit organization.

Your contribution is tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

Please detach and mail to: Meta House, Attn: Development, 2625 N. Weil Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212.

**Thank you!**

Summer 2011